

MM Docket NO. 98-35  
DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

From: "aceoconnell" <aceoconnell@marshall.com>  
To: A4.A4(FCCINFO)  
Date: 5/13/98 6:51pm  
Subject: multiple ownership laws

RECEIVED

MAY 14 1998

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

TO: Commissioners of the FCC

From: Ace O'Connell

Re: Multiple ownerships

Dear Sirs and Madams of the FCC,

I and other radio jocks, the people who provide the heart and soul of radio, write this letter out of sheer desperation. When the FCC changed the rules and allowed multiple ownership, radio professionals "right to work" in a free enterprise environment has been greatly affected. Please take a moment to consider our plight, reconsider, and repeal the current multiple radio station ownership rules.

Prior to the multiple ownership allowances, a radio announcer (or other radio employee) had the option of conducting business with a competitor station in the same town, city, or broadcast market area. Unfortunately, with the rules as they now stand, a radio employee does not have this option. The same few companies own most or all of the local radio stations, a monopoly situation. If the radio employee is not happy with the management of their current employer, the employee's options now include having to pack up their families and move half-way across the country in search of a market that offers equivalent or better opportunities.

Radio announcers in particular can no longer walk across the street and apply for a job at the competitors station, because the competitor is owned by the same corporation as the one he just resigned from, was terminated from, or would like to leave in search of better employment. Corporate owners are aware of the announcer's plight, and are using it to their advantage. As in a gas war, we become the victims of one or two corporations, greatly reducing our opportunities to work competitively within the same market, and receive competitive payment accordingly.

We ask that you please consider repealing the multiple ownership rules, and return our markets to a competitive, democratic and free enterprise system. Independently owned radio stations will not survive under current ownership rules, nor will the employee's and their families who have given their life to the radio broadcast medium.

As a professional radio broadcaster, I've always understood that the three main functions of radio is to "inform, educate and entertain." These core functions are weakened and compromised under the current rules, with the public being the greatest loser.

Sincerely,

Ace O'Connell

2

## DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

From: "aceoconnell" <aceoconnell@marshall.com>  
 To: A4.A4(FCCINFO)  
 Date: 5/13/98 8:58pm  
 Subject: Airvibes

RECEIVED

MAY 14 1998

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Sirs and Madams,

Here is but one small area of the worlds frustration over current rules regulating multiple ownership of radio stations as these rules apply today.

A Concern for ALL aged D.J.'s

Bill e-mailed me a few days ago in regard to the difficulty in finding employment in part do to the deregulation of radio in the 80's. Announcers today (all ages) have 3 large problems facing their future. Satellite programming, multiple ownership's, and the lack of an organized Union. I don't consider myself an instigator of unrest within the industry, but something must be done to preserve the medium before it becomes as bland as breakfast cereal. First, satellite programming. Recently in Kentucky severe weather including tornado's found it's way to many cities within that state. In one city that was hit hard by a tornado, a radio station was pumping out their satellite signal. Anyone listening to that station received no pre-warning of the dangers moving in on them. Following the destruction of this town, and when power was restored, on came the satellite station carrying on with their love song requests and contests...oblivious to the plight of their out-of-state recipients now buried in debris. This is a true, and perfect example of how the audience of a satellite station is not being served by the FCC's credo..."To inform, educate and entertain" the public. How many unemployed, fully capable announcers I wonder were in that community job hunting while this satellite station not only deprives them of a job, but (with no weather alerts) threatened their very existence! Secondly, multiple ownership's...yes, we certainly have learned to kiss the management's butt these days haven't we? If we stand up for our rights and get fired, well you mine as well prepare to start packing. In my market alone there are 18 radio stations...and TWO owners. Bill was saying he has 32 stations in his market with little more than TWO owners. Thanks Ronald Reagan! We can no longer walk across the street and work for the competition because our boss OWNS the street, town, market, and in many area's even the local newspapers! When I was terminated in this market, I was e-mailed by several listeners that couldn't figure out why their editorial comments weren't "hitting" the paper. I had to write them back and explain the radio station and newspaper were under the same ownership, thus certain letters were accidentally (on purpose) "misplaced". And finally, the lack of proper Union representation. Ah, yes...the problem of proper Union representation...We have become such a weak, meek "Thank God I gotta JOB!" group of individuals that to even attempt to organize a union would surely be the kiss of death to our careers. So the answer lies in each of us. Do we set on our asses until radio declares us as extinct as the tail is to humans, or do we maybe start thinking about these things and possible actions that we as a group (a LARGE group) may do? Just food for thought mind you. I enjoy brown-nosing my boss every day and wouldn't THINK of rocking the boat. I have to go now and shine the G.M.'s shoes. Ta! Ta!

Posted by: Ace O'Connell (aceoconnell@marshall.com) on Tue May 5 19:59:50 EDT 1998.

-----  
 Us ol'dinosaurs

Ace, Bill, Craig, and all ol'dinosaurs. Keep the faith! We are the last. The last who really care about what radio should be. No matter what size of market, no matter how little the pay, we are...and always will be...what is good in Radio. We do it not for the almighty dollar...and in many cases not for the greater glory that it brings to our names. If, each day, you can

2  
 M M Docket no. 98-35

make a person smile, laugh, cry or reflect for just one simple small moment then you have done your job well. If others around you do not understand or reward that undeniable talent to connect then their lives are the worse for it. For it is in us, the old dinosaurs, that the true ability to communicate will pass. Keep doing what you do with pride! And know this...there is...and always will be....listeners who believe in you! Keep the faith. Posted by: Ritch Nickell (nickell@cnet.com) on Tue May 5 15:42:50 EDT 1998.

---

-----  
Thats' Entertainment!!

Ace, Bill... Our numbers are great, those of us who have an in-born desire to communicate. And we are no different than our out-of-work actor brothers and sisters, or anchors and reporters. I heard it all summed up in a line Sharon Stone gave, but someone else wrote, at the American Film Institute's salute to Martin Scorsese... They summed up his work by saying he succeeded in reaching "the innate human desire we all have to share in a common experience."... For me that's what working in Radio, TV, and film is about... helping to create, and share in that magical feeling we all get when we know we are connected and sharing a common experience through a song, a film, or a live moment! It is worth the endless air-checks mailed, rejection letters received, phone calls un-returned, when the next time you can turn on a microphone comes along and you say "Hey... listen to this!" Posted by: Craig Hall-Michael's (virgo@datacom.ca) on Tue May 5 11:28:19 EDT 1998.

---

-----  
Radio as a career

Well said Ace. Perhaps I didn't convey it too well in my last post, but I love radio too. Otherwise I wouldn't have put up with the same horsewater all these years. Somewhere along the line radio forgot that it was in the entertainment business. Seems like that in the last ten years or so that what wasn't commercial material that brought in revenue was simply fill. That's why machines do the air work now. Everyone but the people that own the station loses. We've spent most of our lives dedicated to a business that has no retirement benefits or pension plans. We never made enough money to invest or start our own retirement fund. We never had any security throughout it all, and yep, my wife has always made more than me. (the only reason we ever survived in the first place) Not to mention all the times I've been lured across the country and soundly boned for doing so. What a business! But the magic of knowing your voice might be heard thousands of miles away, and knowing that the song you're playing is making some connection with someone out there is something I treasure. Radio is looking out the window of the control room on a sunny summer afternoon and playing "Hot Fun In The Summertime", or making a dedication to Kathy or Susan for the boyfriend she just broke up with. And it's being able to make some comment that might make her feel a little better about it. Radio is emotion and imagination, and there's not one damn machine on the planet that can supply those two magical qualities .. period! So Thanks Ace .. reading your comments was like looking in the mirror. I think you and I both agree that if you don't feel those emotions when you key that mike, then you're in the wrong business. Live jocks with the freedom to be creative is the heart and soul of radio. That's what makes radio entertaining, or did. Maybe we're just a couple of old dinosaurs trying to hold on to yesterday .. but I have a feeling there's a lot more of us than anyone imagines. Posted by: Bill (radiowriter@rocketmail.com) on Tue May 5 01:45:16 EDT 1998.

---

### Radio as a career

While reading Bill's comments about radio gigs getting more difficult to obtain as you get older, it really is true. Quality and experience mean little to a vast amount of radio stations who will hire young people because it's economically wiser on paper. OK...so you get that "radio" bug, and are now hooked. You think you'll pay your dues for a few years and then hit the "big" leagues. High School and College sports hero's with dreams of hitting the major's also have these dreams. Only 3% of sports jocks ever hit the big leagues and it's the same with radio announcers. 90% of the country is made up of small market radio. But you are different. You will show the rest of us old timers it's only "us" that are burned out. Only "us" that didn't have the "right stuff" to succeed. Maybe you indeed will show us. But if you're unfortunate to find yourself in that 95% category of radio announcers, this is what will happen: You will find yourself getting a job in a small market. You will stay there for a few years, and most likely move on to a medium market. You will then "peak out" with a salary in the 30+ range. You know the next gig will be the one. You find a wife. You marry. You have kids. Soon your wife is making more than you are as your hairline begins to recede. Soon the kids become "clothes" conscious and the budget is tight. Soon you lose that good gig in the medium market to satellite. Soon you realize the reality of radio. The quality and experience you've earned over the past 10 to 15 years mean nothing. To someone hiring an announcer, they ask "2 years minimal" experience. What does that tell you about your 15 years experience? Before anyone gets wrapped up with dreams of grandeur and success, just remember why you got into radio in the first place....not to get rich, but to do what you enjoy doing. Because I guarantee you won't get rich. Finally, if it bothers you to have a wife that earns more than you do, find a new career this second! Don't wait till it's too late. You too will find yourself with 10 or 12 moves throughout the country with little more to show for it than just as many radio station tee- shirts hanging in the back of your closet. That's what many of us will be left with...great memories, no money. I'm not bitter, I'm not burned out, nor am I leaving this business. It's too late to switch careers and it doesn't bother me that my children are going to have to go to college on a scholarship if they decide to go at all, nor does it bother me that I have absolutely no savings in the bank. And findly it doesn't bother me that I've spent a total of 3 or 4 years unemployed in the past 20. We're in this business for the selfish ego that goes with it. If I can't afford to feed the dog, it goes. Radio is addictive, and I am hooked...for better or for worse. Sincerely, Ace O'Connell  
Posted by: Ace O'Connell (aceoconnell@marshall.com) on Mon May 4 15:30:42 EDT 1998.

Please consider the repeal of multiple owner radio stations today.

Sincerely,  
Ace O'Connell